16. The resource reports discuss the removal of aquatic vegetation; please expand on this discussion. What do you mean when you talk about removing aquatic vegetation? Is there any in the area? Indicate where any submerged aquatic vegetation is located in relation to the dredge area and the adjacent areas that might be affected by the dredging operations. Provide the date of the survey and the method of sampling.

Response:

As discussed in Resource Report 2, Section 2.4.8.2, and in Resource Report 3, Sections 3.3.2, 3.3.3, and 3.4.3, as well as in Resource Report 3, Appendix 3B, Essential Fish Habitat Report, and Appendix 3A, Aquatic Finfish/Epibenthic Invertebrate Sampling Data Report, there is no submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) located within approximately two miles of the LNG Terminal and no negative impacts to SAV along the proposed LNG marine traffic transit routes are expected as no SAV beds have been documented along the proposed ship transit route. The closest SAV location recently reported by Orth et al. (2005) was approximately three miles south of the LNG Terminal on the western side of the Patapsco River in Stony Creek. Older records suggest a similar lack of SAV historically within three miles of the LNG Terminal (Orth et al. 1994). All dredging associated with the Project will occur within approximately one mile of the Terminal Site.

As reported in Resource Report 3, Appendix A, marine field surveys were performed by AES between June 27 and June 30, 2006 that confirmed the absence of SAV within approximately two miles of the LNG Terminal. The presence or absence of SAV beds was determined by evaluating a series of transects located within and adjacent to the proposed footprint of the LNG Terminal, and extending radially approximately two miles into the Patapsco River estuary. Furthermore, sample locations surveyed outside of the proposed LNG Terminal footprint, but in the general vicinity of the LNG Terminal, included the eastern side of the Patapsco River. Sampling consisted of visual observations and the towing of a small chain for approximately 0.3 nm per transect at a speed of approximately 2 knots. At the completion of each transect, any vegetation collected was identified to the species level.

While no SAV exists within the general vicinity of the LNG Terminal, and, accordingly, no removal of SAV or impact to SAV will take place as a result of the construction or operation of the LNG Terminal, SAV does exist in other parts of the Project Area. Specifically, as discussed in Resource Report 3, Section 3.4.3, the removal of vegetation, including aquatic vegetation, is associated with clearing activities as part of construction and operation activities (e.g.; clearing, grading) for the Pipeline, including associated storage areas, access roads, and aboveground facilities. Table 3.4-1, *Vegetation Cover Types Affected by Construction and Operation of the Sparrows Point Project*, includes acreages and distance of impacts to various vegetation types, including aquatic vegetation. Aquatic areas consist of wetland and waterbody distance and acreages measured between edges of buffers (indicated by reduced temporary work space, or "TWS" width) on each side of the wetland or stream. Aquatic vegetation acreage impacted by construction and operation for the LNG Terminal and the Pipeline area as listed in Table 3.4-1. Most impacts are related to temporary removal of vegetation.

As discussed in Section 2.5.3 of Resource Report 2, temporary construction impacts in wetlands may include loss of herbaceous and scrub-shrub vegetation. Preconstruction wetland conditions in the temporary ROW will be restored to the extent possible to promote revegetation by natural succession. Topsoil segregation in farmed and unsaturated wetlands will preserve the native seed source, which will facilitate regrowth of herbaceous vegetation once Pipeline installation is complete. In addition, wetlands will be reseeded with approved grasses to encourage recolonization and control erosion.

As discussed in Section 2.5.3 of Resource Report 2, some permanent construction impacts in wetlands are expected to occur. Trees greater than 15 feet in height will be removed from a 30-foot strip centered over the Pipeline in wetlands. This will result in the conversion of some forested wetlands to other wetlands types, including emergent or scrub-shrub type wetlands.